# THE MOTHER'S CHAIN; OR, THE BROKEN LINK.

BY EMMA MARSHALL,

*Author of "Eaglehurst Towers," etc., etc.*

"Are you sure you wish to remain here?" p. 83.

## CHAPTER VI.

### ANOTHER SPRING-TIME.

It was spring-time again at Besthorpe, and the flowers were once more lifting their heads to greet the sun.

The mother's birthday again drew near, and the children were full of celebrating it with flowers and little offerings of love.

"I am quite decided," Elsie said, when a consultation was held on the subject, "that we will not make a chain this year."

"It will only remind mother of last year when, do you remember," Heartsease said, "Maggie's knot of bluebells broke off. Oh, dear! but we do miss Maggie! I hope there will be a letter to-day, for it is a long time now since the postman brought one."

Bernard was already stationed at the gate watching, and the girls, from the window of the room where they were finishing their early morning's work, could see him perched upon the gate-post, with his fair hair blowing in the crisp breeze, and in his hand a whip, with which he was lashing the said post. For Bernard had a strong imagination, and believed this post was a horse.

"Mother is gone down to see the poor Turners," Elsie said. "I do hope Agnes was in time to see her father. Mr. Grey did not think he would live through the night. Here comes mother!" and Elsie ran out to the gate.

Mrs. Armytage looked oppressed with the sorrow she had just seen and shared.

"Was Agnes in time, mother?"

"Yes; and her father knew her, and blessed her. Poor child! it is piteous to see her distress. Has the postman been?"

"No!" shouted Bernard. "I am waiting for him."

"He cannot be coming, I am afraid," Mrs. Armytage said, with a sigh. "Now, Heartsease, I am ready to hear you and Ethel read your French translation and repeat your conversation from 'Le Petit Precepteur.' I hope both are ready."

"You look so tired, mother," Elsie said. "I can hear them to-day; let me."

"No, dear, thanks. Go and capture Bernard, and hear him play his scales." Mrs. Armytage had laid aside her bonnet, and Elsie sent Ethel upstairs for her cap.

As she stroked her mother's hair she saw how grey it had lately become, and she stooped and kissed her, saying, "You are not fretting about Mag, are you, mother?"

Mrs. Armytage was not one of those people who hang their anxieties on their sleeve. She told her griefs to few, and chiefly to One who cared for her, and on whom she habitually cast her burden. But of late Maggie's letters had

been short and unsatisfactory, causing her many heart pains. At first the letters had been long and full; now they were short and constrained, and sometimes a postscript was added, "Forgive this bad writing; I am so tired." And yet she worked on. There had been no respite for her all these months. Lady Highmore found in Maggie what she required, as she had never found it before—someone who would take all the trouble of her dull, plain daughter off her hands. Failing in every hope of seeing Maude shine in society as beautiful and accomplished, she tried to persuade herself that she might yet be able to introduce her as her clever child, with literary tastes and so very original. This introduction into society had, as we know, been put off a year, and that year had been one of incessant toil to Maggie Armytage.

She had by great effort kept so well up to the requirements of the professors whose lectures she attended, that her examination papers had been marked with distinction, while Maude's were, if a little lifted above the old level before Maggie's time, still scarcely up to the average of a girl of twelve.

Maggie had hoped for a holiday at Christmas, but she was disappointed. "We must wait till the end of the summer term," Lady Highmore had said. "We made no mention of vacations in our agreement, Miss Armytage," and Lady Highmore was not a person to abate one tittle of what she conceived to be her due. She was engrossed with writing a new book, and was every month getting more deeply involved in the meshes of society—the fashionable society of art, and music, and literature, which forms a world of its own in London, and whose members are, for the most part, always trying to push past others in the toilsome ascent of the social ladder.

Perhaps if Lady Highmore had been less engrossed with her own concerns she would have noticed the change in Maggie. She had grown thin, and her face had lost the round fulness of early youth. Her beautiful eyes had a hungry, sad expression of unfulfilled longing, and there were anxious lines on her fair, white brow. Perhaps the chief consolation of her life was poor Maude's growing attachment to her, and the pleasant half hours when Mr. Highmore came to the little dark back dining-room, used for a study, and talked to the governess, while the pupil, who loved them both, listened, sometimes understanding, but oftener unable to follow what they were saying, but always heartily admiring them.

One day, a hot May day, when the London season was at its height, and the parks at their fullest and gayest, Maggie was returning with Maude from the College. Maggie often preferred the walk, as it refreshed her, and she thought it was good for Maude. To-day, however, the girl seemed as if she were weighted with lead, and dragged her feet along, clinging to Maggie's arm at the crossings, and finally saying, "I can't walk another step."

"What is the matter?" Maggie asked; "shall I call a cab?"

"Yes. I ache all over; I feel so dreadfully ill."

Maggie looked at Maude and saw she was very pale, and, in spite of the heat, her teeth were chattering in her head, and she said—

"I am so cold and creepy."

"My dear child, you must be ill; what is it?" Maggie asked.

"I don't know. The letters in that horrid Algebra danced before me, and I saw faces on the blackboard at the lecture—horrid, ugly faces, jeering at me as a dunce."

Maggie was much alarmed. A friendly policeman hailed a cab and helped the young lady to mount the step, saying, "You look pretty bad, miss; you ought to go to a doctor."

As soon as they reached De Vere Gardens, Maggie despatched one messenger for a doctor, and with a telegram to Lady Highmore, who was spending two days with friends at a villa at Twickenham; and another to Percy Highmore at the Temple.

Then she got Maude to bed, and soon the shivering and chill were succeeded by burning heat and incessant restlessness, and what was more trying than anything, perpetual, dreadful talk of the faces on the blackboard, and the impossibility of getting out of their sight.

The doctor looked very grave when he had examined the patient, and turning to Maggie, said—

"This is some fever, probably suppressed scarlet fever, but I cannot tell, till my second visit, its precise nature. I will return in the evening;" and so he left her.

## CHAPTER VII.

### THE LINK IS STRENGTHENED.

THE old Besthorpe postman never hurried himself, and the Knoll was the last house in his round, so that the letters were often not delivered till eleven o'clock.

At last Bernard, from his watch-tower on the gate-post, announced that the postman was coming, and in another minute rushed joyfully into the house, shouting out—

"A letter from Mag—a letter from Mag! all pinky and crinkly."

Mrs. Armytage took it from the child's hand with a strange foreboding of evil tidings. It was very short, and only contained the news—

"Maude Highmore is very ill with scarlet fever. I must stay with her, but we have a hospital nurse. Do not be anxious, I am not afraid of infection. The letter will be passed through carbolic acid, so you need not be afraid.—Your loving Mag."

Mrs. Armytage rose hastily, saying, "I must consult Mr. Grey at once."

"Yes, let me go for him, mother," Elsie said, looking with concern at her mother's pallid face. "Yes, I will go—I can run there in an hour! You may come too, Elfin and Bernard—make haste."

Mrs. Armytage sat down again with her accustomed calmness.

"Yes, that will be best, Elsie. Leave Heartsease with me, and be quick."

The letter had fallen on the carpet and turned on its face. Mrs. Armytage saw there was a postscript.

"Lady Highmore has just telegraphed that she is afraid of infection, but the nurse is come."

"*Her mother!*" was all Mrs. Armytage said, and then Heartsease drew close to her mother's side, and kissing her, said, with the understanding which children like Heartsease often show—

"*You* would go to Mag if she were ill. You would not be like Lady Highmore."

Mr. Grey came at once, and even reached the Knoll before the girls. He was sympathetic and wise, and said he would himself go and see what Maggie's real position was, and bring back the last account.

"Maggie must come home," Mrs. Armytage said. "Why should she be exposed to a danger the girl's mother avoids? Bring her home, Mr. Grey."

"I could not bring her to this house," he said; "the danger

of infection for the other children would be too great; and besides, scarlet fever must not be imported into a village like this. But take heart," Mr. Grey said; "I have every hope Maggie—he corrected himself, and said Miss Armytage—will escape. Nervous people are those who are ready to catch any complaint. Perhaps that is why we doctors so seldom take infection."

"It *is* kind of you, Dr. Grey, to go to London; it will be such a satisfaction to me to know exactly how it is with my dear child."

"I will bring you a faithful report, and start by the afternoon train from Crayminster." And then Dr. Grey looked at his watch and was gone.

On his way through the village he met Lisa Barker; she never allowed him to pass her, and said—

"Do come in to luncheon, Dr. Grey. Father will be so pleased. He has got a curious old edition of Dante he wants you to see. I do *love* Dante; don't you?"

"Thanks; I am in haste to see a few patients before I go to London by the three o'clock train from Crayminster."

"To London! Oh! if you see that dear Maggie Armytage, give her a scolding from me for not writing. She is so engrossed with the pleasures of literature that she has no time to think of poor little me."

"Miss Armytage is at this time engrossed with a very different matter," Mr. Grey said; but he had the reticence of all good doctors, and having excited Lisa's curiosity, turned and left her.

"'A very different matter;' what can he mean?" she said uneasily. "What has he to do with it? I must go up to the Knoll after luncheon, and find out."

It was Maggie's first experience of illness, and she felt a sense of utter desolation in that large, silent London house. Maude was sufficiently conscious to hold her hand and pray her not to leave her, and she would go over all her lessons and say piteously she knew she was a great bother to Miss Armytage, but she could not help it. The thick utterance, the wild, ferverish babble of delirium, was painful beyond expression to Maggie. The calm hospital nurse told her she was better away from the room, and that there was nothing remarkable in "the case." The fever must run its course, and nothing but sedatives could be tried. The only symptom that is a little unusual is the delirious wandering; it is the wandering of an over-taxed brain. The hours of that bright May day passed on leaden wings. Messages arrived from Lady Highmore with orders that a telegram should be sent to her twice daily, and Mr. Highmore came to take the bulletin and pass it on as desired.

The part of the house where Maude was ill was entirely cut off from communication with the household, and Maggie fetched everything the nurse wanted, and took it up to the room where that ominous sheet steeped in a disinfectant hung.

"Is there anything I can do for you, Miss Armytage?" Mr. Highmore said. "It does seem so hard that you should be left here alone with my sister."

"There is nothing else to be thought of. I could not go home, or indeed to any house, with the fear of carrying infection with me; besides, when Maude knows anything she knows me, and won't let me take my hand from hers. She is in an uneasy doze now, but I think I must return to her."

"I am so sorry——" Mr. Highmore began.

"Don't, please," Maggie said. "I don't want to break down, and besides, I have brought anything I may have to suffer on myself. It may seem hard, but it is right. I would have my own way, and it has been a hard way."

"You judge yourself too harshly," Mr. Highmore said. "Your motive was a good one, and I hope you do not add self-reproach to your present trouble. For my part I feel ashamed to think that my mother has left you here alone."

"She is afraid of infection; I am not," was the reply, with a smile; "that makes all the difference."

"Yes," repeated Mr. Highmore, "*all* the difference; you are right."

As Mr. Highmore was leaving the house he met a gentleman on the door-step who had just rung the bell.

"I beg your pardon," Percy said, "but there is no one in this house except an invalid. Did you wish to see Lady Highmore?"

"I came to see Miss Armytage; has she left the house?"

"No; she is engaged in nursing my sister. To whom am I speaking?"

"To Cyril Grey. I am come from Besthorpe to allay Mrs. Armytage's anxiety, if possible. I am a doctor," he added, "and a friend of the family."

"Oh, then I am sure you will be very welcome, and I dare say you will like to see the doctor who is attending my sister; he is to return here about ten o'clock. Pray come in."

Maggie, who had heard voices, turned back from the stairs to see who was at the door. She sprang down the few steps she had ascended and said—

"Oh, Mr. Grey! is that you? I am so glad to see a familiar face from home!" The strain she had put upon herself when she had been speaking to Mr. Highmore suddenly gave way, and she burst into tears.

"Is mother very unhappy?" she asked, as Mr. Grey followed her into the dining-room. "Don't let her be unhappy; tell her I am quite well, and am not one bit afraid of scarlet fever. Lady Highmore is dreadfully afraid, and of course she is right to keep away. I am quite well," she said, trying to smile through her tears.

Mr. Grey was anxiously scanning Maggie's face, and said—

"You look as if you were over-worked, and not at all fit to take the post of head nurse."

"I am not head nurse. There is a good nurse sent us by the doctor. I ought to be going back to poor Maude now; she is always asking for me. Will you come and see her?"

"I must wait till the doctor comes, and find out whether he wishes me to consult with him; probably not. I am only a country practitioner, you know. Who is the doctor?"

"He lives in Mount Street. His name is Perceval."

"Oh, yes; I know—a great West End swell; and here he comes."

"I will go up-stairs while you talk to him," Maggie said—"only just wait to introduce you."

The great man was very gracious to the little one, but he made him feel that between them a gulf was set.

However, the consultation was held, and Mr. Grey needed no one to confirm his opinion that Maude's life was in danger. There were many complications—an overwrought brain, a generally unhealthy condition, and the fever itself of the worst type.

When Mr. Grey was again alone with Maggie, after Dr. Perceval had left the house, he said, "Are you sure you wish to remain here? I have a friend in London who would receive you, and I am going to see her before I take the train back to Crayminster. She is an old lady, long past all fears of infection, and her household of three servants are all of very mature age. Say, will you let me arrange for you to go there?"

"*No.*" (The "No" was very decided.) "I have by my own

act brought myself into this position, and I will go through with it. I could not leave Maude, for she loves me. Apparently, with a heartless, worldly mother like Lady Highmore, she has never had any one to love before. Yes, I shall stay with her," Maggie repeated. "Give my love to dear mother, and tell her—tell her I shall not be with her on her birthday this year, but that though the chain is broken, the missing link will be restored some day." And Maggie went on, rallying, "Give my love to Lisa Barker. You see her so often, I know."

"I! No, indeed. Forgive me, as she is a friend of yours, if I say not oftener than I can help." Then he pressed Maggie's hand in his, and said, fervently, "God bless you and keep you. I shall come again before long; and if there is anything urgent telegraph for me at once. Good-bye."

That day was the first of many that succeeded it—days of darkness and dreariness within the house in De Vere Gardens, while outside all was gaiety and apparent joyousness in the delicious weather of early summer.

Maude Highmore was in a most critical condition for many days, and when the crisis was passed and the immediate danger was over she lay in a state of utter collapse, with apparently one desire, and that was to keep Maggie always in her sight.

Every one who looked at Maggie saw that she was straining every nerve to keep up, and every one saw that a reaction must come. Lady Highmore spent a fortune in long telegrams, and entreaties that her darling child should have everything that was necessary. Several consultations, at high fees, were held with leading physicians, and it might truly be said no expense was spared and nothing left undone that money could do.

Ah! money will not do everything. A great many utterly selfish people like Lady Highmore insist, as it were, on laying a flattering unction to their soul by excess in every direction except the direction to which duty points. Duty is apt to assume a somewhat hard and uncompromising form, while sentiment appeals for admiration, and not in vain.

Maggie Armytage did not catch the fever, but it was a mere shadow of her former self that was at last removed to the house of Mr. Grey's old friend, who had no fear of infection. Maude was at the same time, under the care of two nurses, removed to Margate, and the house in De Vere Gardens was delivered over to disinfecters and decorators.

Poor Maude wept in a feeble, childish fashion when she found Maggie was not to go with her to Margate.

"I want her; I want her," she moaned. "Why does she desert me? Every one deserts me."

Her brother stopped these lamentations with a stern—

"Don't you see that Miss Armytage is suffering from her constant attendance on you, Maude? how can you be so selfish?"

"She has not got the scarlet fever," Maude said, fretfully.

"No, but she is worn out and on the brink of a serious illness. Does that convince you? Do not be so selfish."

The girl looked up at her brother with touching confidence.

"If you say so, Percy, I'll believe you, and I will not be selfish; but oh, dear, what shall I do without my dear Mag? If anyone can teach me to be good and patient, it is Mag. I can't be good without her."

"That is folly," her brother said. "Show your love for Miss Armytage by doing what she wishes in her absence as well as in her presence."

A few days later Maggie, lying pale and worn at the house of her dear old friend, received her papers from the College. The desire was granted. She had received the highest marks, and had passed in the first class in three different subjects, and the various lecturers had written notes on her papers in terms of high appreciation.

Poor Maude's papers were also returned, unmarked by any commendation, and in one instance a lecturer had written, "Scarcely up to the lowest standard."

"What a mistake it was," Maggie said, "to force that poor girl into work for which she was incapable; and after all, what is it worth? A year ago I should have thought success would have made me happy and almost triumphant, and even now I am only longing for my quarantine to be over and to get home—home to my mother."

"You must be patient, dear," said her kind hostess. "Cyril will know when it is safe, and we may trust him. You would not wish to run any risk with your little brothers and sisters?"

"Oh, no, no! I must be patient."

At last the time came and Mr. Grey arrived to take Maggie home.

There was scarcely a trace left of the bright, vigorous country girl, who had stepped out so gaily to gather flowers in the wood on that May morning a year ago. The spring flowers had faded now, and the burning August days had come, marked by the deepening colour of the roses and the russet gold of the ripening corn.

Mr. Grey had tried to prepare Mrs. Armytage for the change in Maggie, but as she stood on the veranda, waiting to give her child a tender welcome, she could hardly believe that she was really her Mag. The bounding step, as of a young fawn, was slow and uncertain, and she leaned heavily on Mr. Grey's arm as she came up the garden path.

There was a low cry of "Mother," and then, those loving maternal arms around her, Maggie looked up with something of her old vivacity and said,

"The poor link has lost all its brightness, but it will be very firm and strong now."

"The brighter for the furnace, my darling, as all true gold must ever be."

"I like to hear you say that, mother; now come and kiss me, all of you, and let me have tea with you as of old."

Mr. Grey stood apart; he had been looking to the luggage, and was leaving the garden, when Mrs. Armytage followed him.

"How can I show my gratitude to you for all you have done?"

"I think I shall be able to tell you how to do that," he said, with a smile, "but not yet. She is very weak and very frail, and will want the greatest care for a long time. But how can I describe to you the noble self-forgetfulness she has shown? It has been wonderful, and alas! so little appreciated by the heartless woman of the world who, when her only child's life hung on a thread, left her to strangers, from her cowardly fear of infection. From such mothers may we be preserved!" and he hastily walked away down the familiar road to the village.

As he passed the Turners' cottage a pretty, neat-looking girl ran out.

"Please to excuse me, sir, but how is Miss Armytage?"

"I have brought her safely home at last, Agnes, and we must hope country air will set her up."

"I am so glad, sir. Miss Armytage was always so kind to me, and we both left home at the same time. But Miss Armytage has not got the pain I shall have to my dying

day about poor father. I ought never, never to have left them all when he was so bad—never."

"Well, the past cannot be recalled, Agnes; and I think," he added kindly, "you have done your best since."

"Thank you, sir, and mother is ever so much more cheerful now, and so proud of James; he is wonderfully clever at his books, and I expect will be quite a scholar."

"There is something in the air of Besthorpe which makes scholars, I think," Mr. Grey said, as he bid Agnes Turner a kind good-bye.

Another year, and again it is May time, and again it is the birthday of the Queen and of Mrs. Armytage. But this is a grander birthday than any that had preceded it.

"Something is gone, some precious look removed." p. 86.

The whole village was astir, for Miss Armytage was to be married that morning to Mr. Grey. The flowers were again in great request, and the children had determined on making another chain. It was to be laid round the prettily decorated breakfast-table when the guests were assembled.

The bride herself had no part in the manufacture this time; the days were over when she could be up before the lark and brush the dew off the grass at sunrise; for Maggie had never regained her old strength and vigour, though she was now pronounced well, and able to take a moderate share in the duties of life which lay before her.

The bridesmaids were her three sisters and Miss Barker and Maude Highmore.

Poor Maude had so coveted the honour, and was gorgeously attired by her mother's French dressmaker for the occasion.

Lisa Barker had proffered herself in the capacity of bridesmaid, and managed to look very young and fascinating. She had fully expected to see Mr. Highmore at the wedding, and asked Maude why he did not appear.

"He said he would rather go to the other end of the world," Maude said. "It is very odd, for no one loved and admired my dear Mag more than he did."

There were other people who, unlike Maude, did not think it so odd, and had a pretty shrewd idea why Mr. Highmore preferred an excursion to the end of the world to the wedding at Besthorpe.

The bells rang merrily. The school children strewed the bride's path with flowers, and from far and near came congratulations and good wishes.

That night, as the mother sat alone in her room, she looked fondly at the flower chain, which Elsie had suspended over the picture of the bride which had been taken for her husband when they were first engaged.

The mother's chain was not broken now, but hung in perfect order, with the knots of wild hyacinth, each of the five in their proper place. The lost link had been only lost for a time, and now had added another to the chain in a son-in-law to whom Mrs. Armytage's heart turned with almost maternal tenderness; a double link, to strengthen the others, and to hold the love of sisters and brothers in a closer union.

Earnestly did the mother pray that the chain which had been formed on earth might shine more and more brightly in the eternal kingdom, where neither moth nor rust can corrupt, nor thieves break through and steal.

THE END.

## THE LOST LIKENESS.

THEY cannot give thee back to me, belovèd,
These pictures of thy face;
Something is gone, some precious look removèd,
Some treasured touch of grace.

I know not what is lost; but yet in yearning
I wistful seek in vain,
Within thy portrait, for the smile's returning
Earth shall not see again.

Thy lips had kindly tremble none can render,
Thine eyes had patient light;
Here are thy features, but thy soul so tender!
Is it not veilèd quite?

How I have hungered for some picture breathing
Thy presence round life's way!
The daisies o'er thy grassy grave are wreathing,
And my heart hungers aye.

Oh, that when at the sunset I shall hearken
The waves of Jordan beat,
When all of earth shall softly seem to darken,
I find thee, know thee, sweet!

Oh, that when at the Dawning shall be given
The Matin-call "*Arise!*"
I see again thy face in God's fair heaven,
The smile within thine eyes!

MARGARET HAYCRAFT.

## MOTHERS AT HOME.

BY E. M. WATERWORTH.

### CHAPTER III.

BABY—HOW TO TEACH HIM.

IF we have got to walking we have come to the time for carefully training our child; for sowing the good seeds which with God's blessing will by-and-by spring up and bring a rich harvest of virtues and pleasant ways.

Long before a child needs shoes for walking, it needs guidance and restraint for its temper. Your baby screams perhaps as no other baby of yours ever screamed before, not from pain but real naughtiness. Don't be alarmed, it shows two things which you as a wise mother ought to be glad to see. First that its breathing apparatus is perfect, secondly that it has great energy of character.

Now it rests with you whether that energy shall be turned into a right channel, and your child grow up a determined, plucky boy, who will struggle through difficulties which would take the heart out of his elder brother; or whether he will be a tiresome, disobedient, wilful lad, who will bring sorrow to your heart, and misery to himself eventually. Believe me, it is the babies who have wills of their own who may grow into the most noble characters. It is the babies who give the most trouble, who may by-and-by give the greatest happiness. Your namby-pamby children who never seem to care what becomes of them, may be less trouble to rear, but they don't bring the same glow to a mother's heart in after days. You will notice that I say all this good *may* come of energy of character; alas! for us mothers if we prevent it by our mismanagement.

It is said that the mother of the noble John Wesley never allowed any of her children to scream loudly. I don't know how she managed it I am sure, but this I do know, that a baby can be trained to most things, if only you begin soon enough.

Now one principal thing to remember with children generally, and babies in particular, is, that you must never lose your temper, never raise your voice. The more passionate a baby is, the more need that the mother's voice should be quiet but firm.

Never shake a baby: you may do serious damage to its brain. Never slap a baby. First, because it is so very tiny and your hand is heavy, though you may not intend it to be so; next, because if you once begin slapping you are bound to go on, and if you have to slap a child of two years old before you can make it mind, pray what will you have to do to one of ten?

I know well that many of you will not agree with me. "It's all very well for you to talk," you will say; "you have a nurse and a nursery, and if the children are not good, you can get rid of them. If you had the work of the house to do, and to mind two or three children into the bargain, you'd forget all your fine talk against slapping, and be glad enough to give Mary and Johnnie a little pat to make them quiet."

My friends, there is a great deal of truth in what you say. There is every excuse for you, who are amongst those who toil with their hands, using what you think is a sharp remedy; but for all that I maintain that it is a wrong one, and one which you may bitterly repent. Listen a minute. Twelve years ago I had one little girl whom I have mentioned before. I had no nurse, and although I did not toil with my hands as you do, I worked with my brain. There was the dinner to be prepared, for I had only a young servant; there was the tale to be written, and baby would not go to sleep as usual, she would romp in her crib. I lost my temper, and slapped her bare arm.

She looked up in surprise, then in a second she held the little arm up to me, "Oh, mother, hurts—kiss it."

That child died within a few months. I have had many a sorrow, but I'd bear them all again to be able to undo that one hasty action of mine. I don't think a day has passed during the twelve years without my seeing the little upturned face and outstretched arm, and hearing the piteous voice.

Besides, children don't really care for a slapping. "She's a hardened little thing, she doesn't mind whatever I do to her," says many a worn-out mother. Of course she doesn't, because, like the eels, she is getting used to it.

Not long ago I was listening to a friend's account of the battle she and her husband had with a mite under three years old. The child would not pick something off the floor which she had thrown down in temper. They tried for half an hour, then they whipped her, and she picked it up. I shook my head.

"Oh, I forgot, you do not approve of whipping," said the mother. "Then what punishment can one give?"

"I'll be bound," I said, "that a child who had never had any punishment but being put in the corner, would mind it as much as your child minded the whipping."

"You're right there," she said; "this morning she was naughty again, and I told her I should give her a real hard whipping this time. Will you believe it? the little monkey went and lay down on the sofa ready. Of course I couldn't help laughing."

Now what I want to impress upon you is this, that no child under seven need be whipped, if you never begin it. First of all begin at the very beginning. A tiny baby soon understands "No." If you say no, you must mean no, not give way because baby has put out his hand half a dozen times for the thing he ought not to have.

Accustom your child to see that there are certain things in the room he must not touch. I suppose every baby that ever lived showed an affection for the coal scuttle as soon as he could crawl. I know mine all do; but is that a reason why all their clothes should be blackened, or the scuttle put away out of reach? By no means. Pop the youngster into the corner every time he goes near it. If he won't stop in the corner put him into his chair and turn his face to the wall; if you can't do that, put him into bed; if you can't do that, carry him bodily out of the room. It will take you a little longer than a slap at first, but in the long run you will gain time, for he will soon understand that "No, baby," means no.

What applies to the coals applies to everything. Why should things always be put out of a child's reach? train it rather to understand that there are certain things that it may, and may not touch. There should be only one exception to this: all harmful things should be safely stored away. Fires should not be left unprotected, even though baby knows he must not lean over the fender; because he might fall down by accident, or a spark might fly out. Matches and medicine, firearms and machinery, should be far out of every child's reach.

The great thing with young babies is not so much to *punish* as to distract the attention, hence, putting a child in the corner will not affect his little mind at first as a cause for grief, but will give him something else to think about. By the time the child is two years old, most of the battles will be over, and you will, by kind, firm treatment, have secured his obedience without losing your own self-respect, as all true women must, if they have seriously, on their knees, thought over using brute force to a helpless child of tender years.

Let your child believe in you. "If you do that again I'll punish you," says a mother. The child does it again, but the mother takes no notice. Then, when the little one has hurt itself or broken something, down comes the mother's hand on the little arm or back. This isn't punishment, it is revenge and injured pride.

Make your children as happy as you can, my friends; the years pass quickly, cares and work and worry will come soon enough to sadden the little hearts; will you not shelter them as long as you can, and give them all the bright happiness in your power? I am sure you will.

I suppose no one will attempt to deny that the first few years of life are the most quietly happy, if children have good parents. There may be deeper happiness of a different kind afterwards; but there is also deeper sorrow. School-life brings many sad hours to a sensitive child, and the little ones feel just as keenly as we do. Troubles which are trifling in our eyes are terrible giants to them. For the sake of the Christ Child, whose life we long for them to copy, let us try to brighten the lives of the little ones, playing with them when we can and talking to them whilst we do our work.

To be really happy, a baby must be well; to be really well it must take plenty of exercise. Not the reckless tossing up to the ceiling which will, perhaps, injure the brain for life, and even bring on convulsions; not the ceaseless rocking from side to side which often will interfere with his digestion and produce sickness; but real exercise, such as nature meant him to take. Why does a kitten run after its own tail? Simply because that is the one plaything which nature has provided for it, and because it needs exercise. If you shut one kitten up in a cage so small that it cannot use its natural plaything, you might feed it on dainties fit for a king, but the kitten's muscles would dwindle, its bones would be weak and crooked, and it would be puny; whereas if its brother were allowed freedom, and had to scavenger the street for food, it would be strong and active, albeit one of the lean kine. The muscles and bones grow strong by exercise, just as the brain grows in after years by ceaseless questions. Who has not been bothered by the questions of an enquiring child, as by the swinging legs of a restless one? Still mental and physical fidgets do good.

So it comes to pass that the children of the poor are, as a rule, so much more strong and active than those who are more carefully nurtured. They get less nursing. The less the better, say most people who know anything about it. Let them kick on the floor with their clothes turned up, or if there is a great draught, put down the mattress or the squab of a sofa. There let them kick and grow strong, laugh and grow fat, to their heart's content.

But, alas, there is another side to the picture. Do as you will, your baby may be taken from you. The little feet may be led from the thorny path of this world into the flowery garden of Paradise. What can be done then?

If it is a lingering illness, you will have more cause than ever for thankfulness that your child loves and obeys you. You will watch the little sufferer and thank God from your heart that she has learnt, young as she is, that mother knows best. No battle then over every dose of medicine; no struggle over every external remedy. You will tend her with your heart bleeding, but when all is over, and you clasp the little hands in peace upon the breast, you will thank God that you had no nurse, that "mother" was the one person in the world to her, and you will look forward with joy to the time when her little hand shall clasp yours in Heaven, for may we not hope, as Bishop Bickersteth says, that

> "A babe in glory is a babe for ever.
> Perfect as spirits, and able to pour forth
> Their glad hearts in the tongues which angels use,
> These nurselings, gathered in God's nursery,
> For ever grow in loveliness and love
> (Growth is the law of all intelligence),
> Yet cannot pass the limits which define
> Their being. They have never fought the fight,
> Nor borne the heat and burden of the day,
> Nor staggered underneath the weary cross.
> Conceived in sin, they sin not; though they died,
> They never shuddered with the fear of death.
> These things they know not and can never know."

"Thank God for that," you will say; and often when your own heart is weary, and soul and body faint because of the way, I am sure you will be able to thank God that your little one is garnered safe—stored away, as a friend of mine used to say of the four children who had been one by one taken from her.

**Mother and Child.** [*From a painting by W. T. C. Dobson, R.A.*

There's no doubt that life is not a very happy thing, even for the happiest. There are troubles of all sorts; little every-day worries, which sting like a nettle, not enough to kill us, but quite enough to make us most thoroughly uncomfortable. And yet, of course, this is only what we must expect. Life is, as it were, our schooltime for eternity.

Your boy likes his school, but he would far rather be at

Angry Words—A Washing-day Incident.

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home. So there is no harm in our preferring the next world to this, provided we do our utmost to do our duty here and to make others as happy as we can. Yes, and here the unselfishness of a true mother comes in; she will gladly give up all, that her children may be well and happy.

Do your best, then, dear friends, for your children, and leave the rest to Him who knows all things, yet loves us better than He knows.

## WASHING-DAY.

BY LEOPOLD WAGNER.

An eminent art critic, descanting upon one of Mr. Alfred Parsons' most successful creations,* thus verbally illustrates that artist's conception of the delights (?) that accompany the periodically-recurring washing-day peculiar to our domestic civilisation. "It gives us a glimpse," he says, "of washing-day at its best—that is, washing-day in the country, with a merry and boisterous wind, that out of sheer hilarity might blow clothes and lines and pegs and props clean away, to the chagrin of the housewife and the amusement of small imps of boys. Possibly, however," he then goes on to say, "the house-mothers of the metropolis will not be inclined to take such an extreme view. They will gaze with envy at the open space and think of their stuffy little hole-and-corner gardens and their big laundry bills; they will note the fluttering linen on the line, and they will feel with sympathy and some longing—not the longing of Autolycus, by the way, in whom a hedgeful of linen did always 'set the pugging tooth on edge'—that it must have been 'a fine drying wind' which suggested such an admirable and pleasant picture."

It will scarcely be deemed necessary, on our part, touching upon the above remarks, to pen an exhaustive essay upon the disadvantages under which the denizens of the metropolis and other crowded cities perform the customary cleansing of the family linen, the distinction between washing-day in town and country being at once apparent to all. Nor is it our intention in this place to dwell upon the disagreeable, albeit semi-humorous, aspect of the subject in which the unfortunate husband—who, from whatever cause arising, finding himself constrained to remain beneath his own roof on a washing-day—evinces a fortitude sorely tried by the untidiness of the household generally, the damp and unwholesome vapour that arises amid the immediate scene of operations, the clamours of the unwashed and half-dressed children, the slip-shod arrangement of the family meals, and, in short, the utter chaos which prevails on every side. Neither, to our own certain knowledge, does the hiring of a professional laundress on such necessary occasions lessen to any marked degree the temporary discomfiture that distinguishes the home circle the while; though at the same time heads of families, we opine, are inclined to lengthen their countenance at the regular accounts that are sent in from those establishments where the soiled linen of a household is rendered once more agreeable to sight and feeling.

It might be, however, remarked, in passing, that on the Continent, as in America, the disagreeables attendant upon the family wash are infinitely less than those which fall to our own lot, the local authorities abroad having for some years past furnished facilities for the operation which tend to dispense with washing-day at home *in toto*. In Paris, for instance, specially-appointed wash-houses, to which each housewife is at full liberty to bring her share of soiled linen, are distributed throughout the various districts—a scheme that has been partially copied in portions of London where the back-yards or drying-grounds of the inhabitants have been encroached upon by the march of modern street improvements; while at Strasburg, Mannheim, Frankfort, Cologne, and other cities so conveniently situated, special washing-boxes, consisting of floating and covered pontoons, are moored in the river for the convenience of those who appreciate the aphorism that "cleanliness is next to godliness." In the United States, again, the functions of the laundress have during recent years been monopolised by the pig-tailed inhabitants of the West, whose original immigration through the Golden Gate of San Francisco, as attendant slaves upon the miners of a past day, marked the foundation of a new calling that has remained their own to this hour. Thus, scarcely an American city now exists that has not its own Chinese quarter, in which all the characteristics of the Celestial Empire are fully preserved, and wherein the seemingly unmasculine occupation of washing and drying the clothing of the free-born inhabitants is carried on, day in and day out—Sundays alone excepted—throughout the year.

In another part of the globe, viz., in India, the absence of the usual washerwoman from the family service is again to be noted, the office in this case falling to the professional laundryman, who may be seen during the cool of the day beating the linen entrusted to his charge at the river's edge upon a large stone with a flail-like instrument—but which performance will scarcely recommend itself to the attention of such householders as do not desire their apparel to be literally hammered into shreds during this peculiar process. These are, we believe, the only instances anywhere extant wherein the male sex have succeeded in wholly supplanting the domestic laundress; nor should we hail the introduction of such a system in private life nearer home in the light of a boon.

Taking an historical view of the subject, the idiosyncrasies of washing-day, at home and elsewhere, might fur-

* See MOTHERS' COMPANION, November, 1888, p. 169.

nish abundant material for comment—more, in fact, than could be compressed within the limits of a fugitive essay. Primarily the clothes were always cast into deep wells or pits, situated just beyond the city walls, where they were subjected to a prolonged soaking in a liquid that apparently possessed all the virtues of our modern soap. Afterwards, descending to the time of the Anglo-Saxons, a kind of lye was compounded out of bran, meal, fat, tallow, fuller's earth, and animal and vegetable refuse, which held its own long after soap itself was introduced by the Normans and grew into request.

Notwithstanding the after-popularity of soap, however (which term has been, by the way, directly derived from *Savon*, the name of a small Italian port, near Genoa, whence the very acme of soap-manufacture has long since found its way to the different portions of the globe), the old Jewish method of stamping the clothes under the feet still survived; nor was it until a comparatively recent period that the arms of the washer were called into requisition, as more becoming to the nature of the work as well as to decency. Indeed, it was then no uncommon thing to discover a trio of busy housewives uniting their energies, as it were, in the performance of their regular wash; on which occasions they would lay hold of each other's shoulders, and standing, with their garments tucked up, upon the clothes already in soak in a stream, or in the common wells of the town, thus, to the time of a merry song, engage in a well-set dance, in order to stamp out their impurities.

True enough, this old-fashioned custom is not totally extinct. The housewives of the more rural districts of Scotland and Ireland are particularly noted for pursuing their laundry work out of doors; and, as often as an adventurous pedestrian may chance to stumble upon one of those retired nooks of nature where a nimble stream meanders pleasantly through the rugged scene, there, too, will often be found a bevy of the modern daughters of Eve industriously assisting the action of the running water through the linen with their feet. At other times the clothes may be taken to the river's bank, and there treated in the same fashion, being trodden under foot in the large tub, or "buck," in which they are carried from home.

Briefly, the term "buck" possesses a significance of quite an historical interest. Shakespeare himself alludes to it in several instances, and in the "Merry Wives of Windsor," in the scene where the burly Falstaff is thrust into the *buck-basket*, he describes that article as "so rammed with foul shirts and smocks, socks, foul stockings, and greasy napkins, that there was the rankest compound of villainous smells that ever offended nostril." Hence the antiquity of the modern bedroom linen basket is at once recognisable. Generally speaking, the word "buck" expressed the whole amount to be washed at one time; the *buck-pan* was the tub itself; *buck-ashes* were the lye in which the clothes were cleaned; while "*to be bucked*" meant to be soaked or drenched with water from a "buck," whether the action applied to the wash or as a trick performed by one mischievous person upon another.

Petrarch, in one of his essays, makes use of this somewhat quaint observation: "I perform my own washing at home," by which, as we take it, he must have differed from the common practice of the ancients, who sent their linen to be regularly treated by the launderers of the time, known as *fullers*. According to Pliny, the historian, the process employed by these artificers was not a little elaborate, such as demanded the most carefully appointed workshops, or *fulleries;* and what with the dilutions in water, and fumigations with sulphur, and rinsings with real cinolian earth (whence our *fuller's earth*), and rubbings and brushings and dryings, and final pressure preparatory to folding and returning in fit form to the householders, the calling of the fuller must have been an important one indeed. In more modern times the functions of the Roman fuller appear to have descended entirely to an equally distinguished member of society, viz., the dyer; though the unsatisfactory truth remains that, among the early English especially, the impurities contained in the people's linen were thenceforth more commonly *dyed out* than removed by washing.

## "PENNY WISE, POUND FOOLISH."

This is an age in which cheap food and cheap dress can be obtained everywhere. Old men wonder at the alteration in the price of things since they were young. This very cheapness encourages a love of bargains. There are people who are not satisfied with having their money's worth; they want more. But bargain-hunters often find themselves taken in. They save their penny and lose their pound. Their miserliness accepts a poor article rather than pay a fair price. A flimsy fabric, or a stuff of glaring tints, bought because it is cheap, generally costs more in the end. Boots not watertight are likely to prove costly in the matter of medicine. Summer jackets and thin petticoats in the winter time open the door to the doctor.

Girls who earn their own living are sometimes in danger of reckoning too exclusively by standards of money. They do not look far enough ahead. They are eager to leave school, and begin to gain, forgetting that extra education tells in the long run. They flock to the large towns for the sake of higher wages, forgetting the greater wear and tear, the dangers to health, and, more important still, to happiness. Sometimes they even refuse to go home for a visit because of the money it will cost. What a miserable saving of pence, and losing of that which money can never buy. Who can tell in pounds and shillings the worth of home-coming, the joy of union, and the inspiration of a mother's advice and a father's tenderness?

In the same way we may be stingy over our time. In too great a hurry to do a thing well at first, we have to waste hours in repairing the mistake of a minute. We miss the morning reading and prayer, save five minutes, and lose all the calming and sobering and strengthening effect of communion with God.

We may be penny wise, pound foolish over our pleasures. Grasping at some small joy, we may fail to see a greater one at hand. The chance of a happy home may be thrown away for a day's pleasuring.

There are some who are saying that they will not come to Christ because of the enjoyment they must resign. They are unwise as well as sinful. The pleasures they must give up are trivial in comparison with those which they would gain.

Can wild oats be so valuable as the garnered grain of a well-spent life?

They win their miserable pennyworth of enjoyment and lose the satisfaction of duty done and character developed. They have the delights of sense and miss the joys of the soul. They choose earth instead of heaven. For the sake of the infinitely small they reject the infinitely great.

Edith Ormond Payne.

# A MOTHER'S MISTAKE.

BY FAITH CHILTERN.

(*Continued from page 78.*)

Ebenezer, or Ebb, as he was generally called, was now verging on twenty-two, and was the senior by several years of the others, for, after him, more than one had died in infancy; while, again, between Leah and Clement, there had been another little faded blossom and another little grave made.

He had been apprenticed to a builder in the neighbourhood, an uncle having paid the chief part of the premium; but he was now out of his apprenticeship, and was, people said, a clever workman, one likely to get on well.

He had always lived at home, and, during his earlier years, had never called in question nor expressed dissatisfaction with his mother's rule; but lately he had often done so, for it vexed him that he could have no room in which to read or amuse himself, undisturbed by the little ones or by the performance of household tasks; and he had long outgrown his respect for the parlour and his childish awe of breaking or soiling anything in it, and had no more sympathy with his mother's feelings than had she with his.

It was late when he returned from the "Lion," and well would it have been had she but taken warning, retracted her decision, and sought by all lawful and innocent means to keep him safe from temptation through the long winter evenings, at whatever sacrifice to herself. But she did not; and many a night after did she have to sit up watching for his return—to hear from him words which son should never breathe to mother, and to weep bitter tears of sorrow, shame and wounded love.

"That young man's sowing wild oats pretty fast," observed an acquaintance, a few months after. "A pity, too, so steady as he used to be, and such a bright, clever young fellow."

"Yes, it's a bad job he's got hanked in with the set he has. I suppose 'twas the music and the band attracted him. Young folks like life and amusement, only 'tis a pity they don't try to find it somewhere else. I expect next he'll get turned off. I heard Starling say he must give him the sack if he wasn't more punctual; they say he'll be off half the day drinking now."

The words were only too true. Ebb was sowing wild oats fast. At first he had sought the public-house for comfort, music, and companionship, and thought he had found them. But by degrees other desires had been aroused within him; the good influences and impulses which had made his earlier youth fair, had been gradually weakened, and a craving for the stimulating draughts for which he had once cared nothing, had come upon him, till now he was held fast in the meshes of intemperance.

Peace and domestic felicity had never been very strong points with the Nortons, though they were fond of each other in their own way; but now the home atmosphere was more clouded than formerly, the father's face wearing a look of gravity unusual before, and the mother, with this trouble grieving her, though she was not less brisk and regular in her household duties, growing more moody and irritable, while the little ones learned to keep out of the way of their eldest brother, and wished he wouldn't make mother so cross.

Poor mother! She had been so proud of her respectability, of her clean house and well-dressed children, and it hurt both her pride and her love that her first-born should thus go astray, as also to hear the various comments, condolences, and predictions which reached her.

"I tell you what, if I was you or his father, if he wouldn't come home in proper time, and conduct himself as a young man should, I'd turn him out, and let him get lodgings where he could," said one neighbour, after detailing a rumour she had heard; "I'd never put up with it as you do, Mrs. Norton."

"You are not a mother," replied Mrs. Norton, sadly.

"No, and I'm thankful I'm not; but if I was I'd be mistress in my own house."

Mrs. Norton sighed. She had begun to think lately that it was possible she had been mistress rather too much in days gone by. She remembered the first complaints her son had made, and how she had been heedless of them, or answered them with sharp words; how he had at one time begun to devote himself to study, but had to put up his books because of the noise and the frequent interruptions; how, too, when he had employed himself in amateur carpentry, she had complained of the mess he made, and how coldly she had received any proposal of his to bring home his friends to tea. She had attended well to his bodily needs, but had not recognised any others; it had never occurred to her as it did now.

"But I will make another effort," she thought; "I will give up anything, everything, if I can only save my boy."

That evening when Ebb returned from work, he was surprised by seeing a fire in the front room, for again it was nearing winter, and the evenings were growing chilly.

"Why, what's up?" he inquired of the little ones. "Who has been, or is expected to-night?"

"Nobody," replied Clement. "I don't know why mother lit a fire there, I am sure; when I asked her she only cried."

His brother said no more, only gave a peculiar whistle, and as soon as the meal was ended prepared to go out.

But the mother's hand was laid on his shoulder, and the mother's voice detained him.

"Ebb, don't go to the 'Lion' to-night," she said, pleadingly; "don't! Do stay at home! There is a fire in the parlour, and you may ask in who you like. You may have it for your own use or do anything you will in it, and I won't say a word again, but do keep away from that place, and those who will lead you to ruin."

Sobs choked her utterance, but he was unmoved, or tried to appear so.

"Oh, so that's the go, is it?" he said, with a light, scornful laugh; "but I don't want your precious parlour! When I did I couldn't have it, but was obliged to be packed up with the rest here, all of us like pigs in a pen, without room to do anything, and I shouldn't like to vex your tidy soul by profaning it with my presence now. No, I'll go where folks don't live for show, and you can keep it as neat and proper as you like!" and roughly shaking off her hand, he turned to go.

How the words and action hurt the mother no one could tell, but she said no more. None but God fathomed her grief or heard the prayers which were poured forth in the solemn hours of night, hours when the beautiful stars were shining like gentle guardians, and earth and heaven seemed to draw nearer each other, yet hours in which her heart was weary with listening for the feet of the prodigal, who was not drawn nearer heaven, but seemed instead sinking lower and lower, till she feared the end.

As had been predicted, he shortly lost his situation, his

employer averring that, though one of his best hands, he could not keep him longer; and there were days of lounging at the "Lion" or seeking for employment, but, as there was a depression in trade, this was not easy to find, and one morning he announced his intention of giving it all up and going for a soldier.

The mother uttered a cry of dismay, for the time was unquiet, and a vision of him lying dead or wounded on the battle-field rose before her; while the father, too, added his persuasions, and told him he need not resort to that so long as there was a crust at home; but their influence had long been set at nought, and he had fully made up his mind, and was not to be dissuaded, especially as several others had come to the same determination, all having agreed to meet at the "Lion" for a spree, and then go to the nearest town and enlist.

Very sad were the hearts of the parents as they watched him go out, though the little ones thought it was a fine thing to be a soldier and wear a red coat.

But things do not always turn out as we expect, and not on the battle-field, amid the din and rattle of musketry, was the hardest battle of the would-be soldier to be fought.

It was washing day, and as Leah had been for some time in service, Mrs. Norton had plenty to do, and was busily washing, with skilful hands but a heavy heart, when the little ones, who had a holiday from school, ran in.

"Don't fret, Missus; show us where to lay him down."

"Oh, mother, here are some men coming along carrying our Ebb; at least, Jack Mase says 'tis he, and that he's nearly or quite killed."

The mother would never forget the sensations of that moment, nor her fear, when they entered the door carrying a bleeding, insensible form—that of her first-born.

"Don't fret, missus. Show us where to lay him down. They've been drinking and fighting, and he's somehow got pretty badly hurt. He's not sensible now, but he'll come round, and somebody's gone for a doctor. Mind," he added, as she held open the door of the parlour, "our shoes aren't over clean, and his nose is bleeding pretty much, too; 'tull stain the fine carpet here."

"Never mind," she answered, quickly; "put him on the sofa. Oh, Ebb, Ebb, my poor, poor boy!"

Very sad were the days which followed. The injuries the young man had received proved to be more severe than had been thought, and for a time hope and despair alternately prevailed.

It was a glad day when he was pronounced out of danger, but even then there were many long, weary hours of suffering, suffering, too, accelerated by keen self-reproach and the stinging lash of remorse, the hardest kind of all, perhaps, to bear.

It was indeed a time of trouble and of great expense, but no one thought of this, and as soon as he could leave his bedroom the parlour and the couch were, without debate, willingly given up to him, and no pains were spared to make it as cosy and comfortable as possible, while Mrs. Norton uttered not one upbraiding word, and never referred to the marks made by the tramp of dirty feet, or the traces of blood on the carpet. And, although it was hard work for her, she was not without her recompense, for the lesson was not in vain. Lying there, waited upon and cared for with such devoted love, the heart of the erring one again grew soft, and he made a resolve that henceforth, through the help of Him who is "mighty to save," he would lead an entirely new life.

Mrs. Norton, on her part, had also learnt a lesson; and when Ebb again became well, cleanliness, order, and personal appearance were not the only things studied, but the home became more what home should surely be, a place of happy intercourse, recreation and harmony.

The parlour was no longer so faultless in its appointments as formerly; it quite lost the cold, unused look, and became a cheerful, inviting apartment, where music and happy tones resounded, and bright books and pictures lay on the tables. For, taught by bitter experience, the mother no longer looked upon every penny as wasted which was bestowed upon the culture of the mind, but tried to do her best, till all her children could unanimously have endorsed the words of the song, "Home, sweet Home," and have felt that there was "no place like home."

# THRIFTY COOKERY.

BY GINA JONES.

## FISH.

MANY authorities on "food and feeding" have told us that fish is not as highly valued as an aliment as it should be.

The "Fisheries Exhibition" at South Kensington did good service in bringing the consideration of fish as an important article of nourishment more forward than it had been for many years, and in demonstrating the cookery of fish, not only of the superior kinds, but of many of the less known and inferior types. A point in favour of fish as a food is the great variety we are able to obtain, and the numerous easy modes of cooking applicable to both fresh and salt water fish, avoiding any approach to a monotony of diet.

Fish is less stimulating than butcher's meat, and it is usually very digestible. It is particularly suited to people leading sedentary lives, to old people and to children, also "to people who are victims of much anxiety and distress." With judgment in the selection, and care in the mode of cooking, fish has always been considered a good form of food for the sick and convalescent. Nevertheless, it is not advisable to adopt an exclusive fish diet.

It is considered that a fish-eating community are not well nourished, but as part of a dietary fish is most valuable. It is of the greatest importance that fish should be in a fresh state. If it is in the slightest degree tainted it should not be eaten. And in judging of the freshness of fish it is well to remember these points: The eyes should be bright and prominent; the skin should be tight, not rising in blisters; gills should be red; the flesh firm and the fish stiff. There should not be the appearance of blood in the flesh, for it is usually a sign of staleness. Many people are of the opinion that cod and soles are improved by being kept for twenty-four hours. The red-fleshed, or oily fish, are considered more nourishing, but white fish the more easily digested. It has been said that "under ordinary circumstances and prices, a fresh herring offers the largest amount of nutriment for a halfpenny of any kind of animal food." The best herrings are caught in Loch Fyne.

Salmon, ages ago, used to be a poor man's fish, and there is a tale often told in Chester to the effect that the tradespeople of that city were bound in the indentures of their apprentices not to feed their young people upon salmon more than two or three days a week, although the Dee is noted for the superiority of that fish. Needless to say that no such clause is requisite now. Railways and the increasing scarcity of the fish have worked a marvellous change. Now salmon ranks as a fish greatly sought after by the richer classes. With regard to nourishing power, it approaches that of butchers' meat, and on account of its great richness can only be taken in small quantities by many people.

In London, whitebait is looked upon as the most delicate of all kinds of fish, Thames whitebait being considered greatly superior to any other. It must be used in a perfectly fresh condition, and kept in iced water until prepared for cooking. To fry, drain away the water, throw the fish on a cloth, dry them, pick them over, taking out any broken ones, toss them in flour and fry in very hot fat until they are crisp. Then drain them on paper. A cut lemon and some brown bread and butter should be served with the whitebait.

Smelts are much used and liked by many who cannot get whitebait, but these are entirely eclipsed by sparlings. These are obtained in the greatest perfection from the Conway river. The supply is, however, very uncertain. They are in season for but a short time—February and March—and they enter the river in shoals. If there is the least snow-water in the stream back they go to the sea; and though a few may return when the water becomes more congenial to them there is no abundance of the supply. In olden times the castle and town of Conway were held by tribute of a small fee, and the present of "a dish of fish" to the representative of the Crown, "whenever he passed through the town." Possibly *Sparlings* originated the idea of the dish of fish.

Sparlings may be fried like trout, that is, egged and crumbed and fried in a comparatively small quantity of fat in a frying-pan; or they may be floured and fried in a bath of fat, taking care that the fat is extremely hot, but not burning. In either case a cut lemon is the only sauce required.

Of the more every-day fish, whiting is most useful. It is moderate in cost, and a delicate, easily digested fish for an invalid. It is more tasty fried, but frying is not an advisable mode of cooking fish for the sick, the high temperature at which it is necessary to have the fat causing a product which is irritating to a delicate digestion.

A whiting steamed or stewed is more suitable. It is usual to have whiting skinned, and for frying it should be floured, brushed over with beaten egg and coated in bread crumbs, and then fried in the usual manner with a sufficiency of hot fat. It is also nice baked. Place the whiting on a slightly greased tin, squeeze a few drops of lemon juice over it, cover it with greased paper and bake in a slow oven. Serve melted butter or parsley and butter with it.

It may be stated generally that the points to be attended to in the frying of fish are, briefly, these: The fish must be made thoroughly dry. A sufficient amount of fat must be used from the first, and not a little more put in when the fish is half cooked, and the fat must be extremely hot. The boiling point of water is 212° F. Now when it is remembered that the fat must be of a sufficient heat to change any moisture on the surface of the fish at once into steam, it will be known that the fat must be very much hotter than boiling water.

Probably soles are the most steady and universal favourites of all fish, whether sea or fresh water.

Soles of moderate size are considered the best, and the fish taken on the western coasts of this island are superior to those on the northern.

Soles may be cooked whole or filleted. Sometimes the backbone of the fish is removed and the cavity filled with a forcemeat. The sole is then baked and served with sauce. A boiled sole is delicate in flavour, but not such a relish as when fried. Broiling is a good method of cooking soles, especially for an invalid, there not being the presence of fat to make the fish rich, as in frying.

Fillets of sole are nice if baked on a greased tin, a few drops of lemon squeezed over them, and a piece of greased paper placed to prevent browning. These fillets may be served with melted butter (made with milk) or with anchovy or parsley sauce. The bones of the fish should be boiled in milk, and then that milk should be used in preparation of the sauce. There are an endless number of ways of cooking soles, but none better liked than plain fried.

Among the less expensive fish, plaice, hake and haddock hold an important position. The former, although rather a watery fish, is nice when cut into pieces and covered

either with egg and bread crumbs, or with batter, and fried.

Enormous quantities of mackerel are sold during the season. Broiling this fish is probably the best manner of cooking it. A clear fire, a clean gridiron, a little salt, pepper, with a small piece of butter to put on the fish after it is taken from the fire, are all that are required; together with a small amount of care and attention on the part of the cook. Mackerel is a fish that must be used extremely fresh. It will not bear keeping many hours. It is sometimes pickled. The backbone is removed, and then three or four mackerel are laid in a pie dish with a bay leaf, an onion, a little salt, some peppercorns, and covered with vinegar. The dish should be placed in a very slow oven that the mackerel may bake gradually.

Hake is really a good cheap fish. In many respects it resembles cod, but the flesh is not so firm. The head and shoulders may be boiled, but small portions of the fish are better baked or fried. Hake has long been common in Devonshire, though not very well known until recent years in other parts. It is in season in the summer months.

To warm up cod or hake, or any white fish, it is a good plan to have ready a little rather thin egg sauce, and, after removing the skin and the bones, put the flesh of the fish, separated into flakes, into the sauce to warm thoroughly, and serve in a border of mashed potatoes with four or six pickled walnuts as garnish. A little grated horseradish is an improvement.

Any cold fish freed from the bones may be made up with mashed potatoes into cakes, and either baked or fried. An equal weight of the cold fish and cooked potatoes should be used, with seasoning of salt and pepper to taste. The yolk of an egg may be used to bind the mixture and the white to brush over the cakes if they are baked, but if they are to be fried it is better to egg and crumb them in the ordinary way. With a little fried parsley this forms a most useful and popular mode of warming up any remnants of fish.

## SENSIBLE TEAPOTS.

Soon after "What shall we Drink?" appeared in the Mothers' Companion, I received the following letter:—

Madam,—In the present number of the Mothers' Companion, I have read your article with interest, and note the sentence commencing, "Or, is there no one who will invent us a teapot," etc.

Perhaps you will pardon a Connaught woman for presuming to offer you a suggestion which answers your query.

For threepence one can buy an egg-shaped basket of fine wire, intended to hold tea during the process of drawing. I have used one for years to prevent the leaves from coming into the cups, but since reading "What shall we Drink?" I have had the ball taken out with a spoon before the teapot is sent to table, giving the tea five minutes to draw.

Thanking you for your suggestion, and offering you mine,

I am, Madam, faithfully yours,

A Connaught Woman.

S. Patrick's Day, 1890.

After this kindly, sensible letter, came the gift of a little black teapot from a friend who had seen it by accident in a shop, and who fell upon it with joy. It has a perforated receptacle for the tea-leaves, and after brewing for a few minutes this can be lifted out. And so, it seems, the teapot *is* invented! I am told that common brown ones made in the same way can be had for sixpence each. The "Connaught woman's" plan will, however, solve the difficulty for housewives who cling to their silver teapots. One lady tells me that she has the tea made in an earthenware teapot, and then poured into the silver one for table, leaving the leaves behind.

Elizabeth Martyn.

## ADVICES TO A MOTHER.

The first book read and the last laid aside by every child is the conduct of his mother. Consider, then, these suggestions:—

1. First give yourself, and then your child to God, through Christ. It is but giving Him His own. Not to do it is robbing God.

2. Remember that the knowledge and the fear of the Lord are the beginning of wisdom.

3. Pray with and for your child, often and heartily.

4. Always prefer virtue to wealth—the honour that comes from God to the honour that comes from men. Do this for yourself: do it for your child.

5. Let your whole aim be to raise your child to a high standard. Do not sink into childishness yourself.

6. Give not heedless commands, but when you command require prompt obedience.

7. Never deceive a child or break a promise to it.

8. Be sure that you never correct a child until you know that it deserves correction. Hear its story first and fully.

9. Reprove not a child severely in the presence of strangers.

10. Never allow your child to whine, or fret, or bear grudges.

11. Early inculcate frankness, candour, generosity, magnanimity, and self-denial.

12. Never mortify the feelings of your child by upbraiding it with dulness. But do not inspire it with self-conceit.

13. Encourage all attempts at self-improvement.

14. Cultivate sympathy with your child in all lawful joys and sorrows.

15. Never permit cruelty, even to an insect.

16. Remember that life is a vapour, and that you and your child may be called out of life and probation any day.

## MAKE HOME ATTRACTIVE.

The primal duty of every father and mother is to make home attractive to the boys and girls. Some godly-minded fathers, who are very regular at prayer-meetings, and some mothers who never miss their "Dorcas Society," make shocking blunders in the management of their own children. Their "own vineyards" are badly kept and yield only sour grapes. When a boy begins to dislike his home and seeks to escape from it, he has very often reached the first mile-stone on the road to "the bad," and for this dislike his parents may be more than half responsible. I entreat every father and mother to see to two things. The one is that their own dwelling be made just as attractive as possible (and a bright, open fire will pay ten-fold more than it costs as a "means of grace" to your family). The other is, be careful how you trust your boys with a night-key. If you know where he is, very well; if you hand him a night-key, and do not know or care whither he goes with it, you may find out one of these days to your sorrow. A sagacious father said to me yesterday: "The anchorage of my children has always been a bright, happy home." That man has never seen one of his sons wrecked on the rocks of ruin. Thousands of young men really have no home, except the parlour of a boarding-house, and no domestic property, except a trunk up in the third story bedroom.—*Dr. Cuyler.*

## DRESS AND DRESSMAKING.

An English summer is at its very best in June, and if ever it is easy to look clean and bright in one's apparel, it is then. The white frocks in which children and young girls look so well often cost a great deal of time and trouble in the way of starching and ironing, but a new material is in use, called cellular cloth. In white or ecru it is very useful because it is light and looks nice, and only requires washing, blueing, and ironing on the wrong side to be as good as new. Starch would ruin the material at once. Many people feel so comfortable in a washing dress, and like so much to feel that it can be renewed by passing through soap and water, that cellular cloth must be liked when it is known.

The china-blue prints that have been introduced by the artistic firms are very becoming and inexpensive. They make pretty best frocks for hot weather, and wash like the proverbial pocket handkerchief; but not being, like the old cambrics, in any way dependent on stiffness for their beauty, they give very little trouble in getting up. The great art in making dresses of this kind is to let the sewing be as good as for plain needlework, and to use gathers where in other stuffs the fulness would be put in pleats. The fashionable full bodices that are plain at the shoulder seams and drawn in at the waist, allow of being made without lining, and the way to adjust them is this:—Take the front of a plain bodice, made with a couple of pleats or darts, as they are now called, and a straight piece of print, either half or three-quarter width, according to the fulness wished for. Lay the pattern front on a table, tack the print lightly round the neck and shoulder, and down the front. Then make three or four rows of gathering near the waist, leaving the thread loose in each, so that it can be drawn up to the proper length. By means of these adjust the fulness, and when that is done tack round the armhole and side-seam, and turning it over cut out the shape. The back looks very nice if done in the same way, with a few gathers at the waist. The fronts and backs thus prepared will need tacking together and fitting on, but sufficient stuff must be left for double turnings. Then run or machine the seams together on the *right side of the stuff*, about a quarter of an inch from the edge. Turn over again and machine them on the wrong end; thus you get a neat narrow seam without any raw edge or overcasting, and it is also extremely strong. To secure the gathers at the waist in a bodice that has no lining, turn it over and on the *inside*, with needle and thread, make a row of chain stiches at the back of each row of gathers. It will not show on the right side, and will keep all perfectly firm.

A very favourite way of making dresses just now, and one peculiarly suitable for washing frocks, is with the bodice longer than is wanted for a waistband, and the seams curved very little outwards so as to follow the lines of the figure a little below the waist. The edge is turned in all the way round and a wide tape tacked to it, and the upper selvedge hemmed down. This gives a strong and convenient foundation for sewing the gathers of the skirt on. It suits some figures better than the short waist, and requires less elaborate sloping and adjusting of skirt length than a pointed bodice.

There is no better kind of mantle for those who are too old to go about without one, than a good black wool grenadine, made up over a thin sarsenet or Persian silk, and trimmed with a frill of black lace, or perhaps two, one over the other. Either a sling or circular is a suitable shape, and a light mantle of this kind is a perfect boon to many, because though elderly women feel the cold very much, they also feel the heat and cannot bear any weight of clothing.

For a nice cool summer dress, not of the washing order, there is nothing to beat a grey alpaca. The dust shakes off it, and rain does not hurt it very much, and it is suitable for everyone. Braiding looks very nice on it as a trimming, but is apt to make it heavy, unless fine narrow braid is chosen. A very nice way is to edge every part that requires it with a crossway fold, put on with a satin piping, as it is quiet, and never out of date.

Our illustration shows a very simple frock of thin woollen material. The lining must fit as it would for any other dress, and the stuff arranged over it very neatly gathered. We offer no pattern for it, as careful observation will give the exact style of the dress, and an accurately fitted lining will do the rest.

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Keep Your Troubles Sacred.—A worthy wife of forty years' standing, and whose life was not made up of sunshine and peace, gave the following sensible and impressive advice to a married pair. It is so good and so well suited to all married people, as well as those who intend entering that state, that we here publish it for their benefit: "Preserve sacredly the privacies of your own house, your married state, and your heart. Let no father or mother, sister or brother, ever presume to come between you two, or to share the joys and sorrows that belong to you two alone. Build your own quiet world, not allowing your dearest earthly friend to be the confidant of ought that concerns your domestic peace. Let moments of alienation, if they occur, be healed at once. Never, no, never speak of it outside, but to each other confess, and all will come out right."